

Watch Out for Fraud

Helena, Mont. – Residents of Carbon, Park and Stillwater counties who were affected by June's severe flooding should be aware that con artists and criminals may try to obtain money or steal personal information through fraud or identity theft after a disaster. In some cases, thieves try to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance using names, addresses and Social Security numbers stolen from survivors.

FEMA and Montana Disaster and Emergency Services caution victims of Montana's severe storms and flooding event to watch out for potential scams targeting them.

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams, housing inspectors and other officials will be working in areas impacted by the storms. FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration representatives never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications.

Scams

Montana residents need to be aware of common scams.

If a FEMA Inspector comes to your home and you did not submit a FEMA application, your information may have been used without your knowledge to create a FEMA application. In this situation, please inform the inspector that you did not apply for FEMA assistance so they can submit a request to stop further processing of the application.

If you did not apply for assistance but receive a letter from FEMA, please call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. The helpline will submit a request to stop any further processing of that application. If you do want to apply for FEMA assistance after stopping an application made in your name without your knowledge, the Helpline will assist you in creating a new application.

Don't believe anyone who promises a disaster grant in return for payment.



Be wary of unexpected phone calls or visits to your home from people claiming to be FEMA housing inspectors or people claiming they work for FEMA. FEMA representatives will have a photo-ID badge and your FEMA application number. In phone scams, callers typically will ask if you have registered with FEMA for disaster assistance. When confirmed, they may ask for your Social Security Number, income information, checking account number and bank routing information. This is not how FEMA conducts applicant phone calls. Always ask the caller to confirm your application number and hang up if they cannot provide the correct number.

Do NOT give your banking information to a person claiming to be a FEMA housing inspector. FEMA inspectors are never authorized to collect your personal financial information.

If you believe you are the victim of a scam or may have witnessed fraudulent activity, report it immediately to your local law enforcement authorities, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General's hotline at 1-800-323-8603 or Montana Disaster & Emergency Services at (406) 324-4777.

For an accessible video on fraud after a disaster, go to [youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=EVqS709Gj_U&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=EVqS709Gj_U&feature=youtu.be).

If you suspect fraudulent activity involving FEMA, you can report it to the FEMA Fraud Branch at: StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov, fax: (202) 212-4926 or write to: FEMA Fraud and Internal Investigation Division, 400 C Street SW Mail Stop 3005, Washington, DC 20472-3005.

If you suspect identity theft, please visit [Identity Theft | FTC Consumer Information](#) or [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.IdentityTheft.gov).

For more information about FEMA's support to Montana's flooding and severe storms recovery, visit [4655 | FEMA.gov](#). Follow the FEMA Region 8 Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/femaregion8>

